

Question on Notice

No. 188

Asked on 26 February 2019

MR B O'ROURKE ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise what action the Palaszczuk Government is taking to deter illegal fishing?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to the sustainable management of the Queensland's fisheries and to putting an end to illegal fishing in this State. This commitment echoes the sentiments of Queenslanders, who have made it clear that they want action taken now to address these issues.

We have invested more than \$20 million in additional funding for fisheries reform and appointed an extra 20 compliance officers across the state to tackle these issues.

To reinforce the Government's commitment to stamping out black marketing, we recently displayed a forfeited boat at popular south east Queensland boat ramps after a successful prosecution for black marketing. The motors were sold and, because the boat was unsafe, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries crushed it and used the opportunity to publicise it on social and traditional media. The video of the crushing has been viewed almost 200,000 times, reinforcing to the public that, if fishers want to break the rules, they risk losing their boats.

The recent amendments to the *Fisheries Act 1994* will provide our fisheries inspectors with the powers they need to combat illegal fishing and increase the penalties that will apply to those persons convicted of serious fisheries offences such as black marketing.

The changes to the Fisheries Act will also bring Queensland into line with other Australian states by establishing a maximum penalty of up to 3 000 penalty units (currently \$391,650) or three years' imprisonment for individuals convicted of trafficking in priority fish species such as mud crabs, black jewfish and shark. These species are of a particularly high value and known to be targeted by illegal fishing operations in this State.

The Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol has moved to a more intelligence based approach to compliance and is undertaking a range of new activities to support this, like the use of hidden cameras, drones, social media listening and plain clothes operations. Illegal fishers are getting smarter and more organised, and the Government is following suit to crack down on those who are doing the wrong thing and undermining the sustainability of our precious fisheries resources.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to building a legacy of a sustainable fishery for our children and grandchildren, and this includes taking strong action to deter illegal fishing.